

How God Delivered This Woman From Depression's Gloomy Grip

Every day, I sank deeper into my deleterious, damning conclusions. The things I'd come to recognize about myself were true, but how I chose to handle those truths was destructive. Supposing the success of my life was up to me, I supposed those things were condemnations, even sentences. I was disappointed with myself. I was ashamed of myself. I was angry and frustrated and afraid. And I was tormented with guilt for failing to be happy with my lovely life—with my handsome husband and my beautiful children and with the potential to realize my dreams.

Depression.

Depression is stealthy and subtle. It took a while before I recognized I'd become wedged beneath the onerous thumb of depression, and by the time I did, I was a suicidal mess. I actually think it took becoming suicidal for me to realize I was suffering depression.

Somewhere after Christmastime, I confessed to my husband, Brent, that I was depressed and needing help.

Brent hugged me tight and told me he would help me. I hugged him back, thanked him, and said I thought I needed something more, like the pastor or a doctor. Possibly both.

But we were young and under many misconceptions in those days. Somehow, we'd come to believe depression wasn't a thing that could be treated. We believed it was a thing to pray through and snap out of.

Left to my own devices, I redoubled my efforts to wrestle myself free. I memorized my favorite Psalms, began a regular exercise routine, read self-help books and wrote in my

journal.

In spite of the moderate success of my efforts and the priceless bright spots, I steadily deteriorated. By springtime, I thought about suicide every day. If I hadn't been such a dreadful coward, so afraid of pain and of going to hell, I'm sure I would have done it.

I began to cry out to the Lord. Literally. Usually in angry, accusing tones. A regular cry was, "Hey! You promised in Your Word we get to be more than overcomers! Well, this isn't it!" And then I'd huddle, half-fearing, half-hoping a bolt of lightning would strike me from the earth.

Around this time, my parents attended a weekend workshop they really enjoyed called From Curse to Blessing, and they invited Brent and me to attend another with them in May. I was disinclined.

Having already spent so much time in sincere, yet seemingly fruitless prayer, all aspects of the event were grossly unappealing to me. But I was desperate, and I felt obligated to my family to give the thing a try.

On the way there, I prayed. "Okay, Lord, here's the deal. I'll go to this conference and sit through every minute. I'll humble myself and do whatever's asked of me. That's my part. Your part is You'll come fix me. If we get to the end of the weekend and I've done my part, but You haven't done Your part, I'm going to go home and kill myself." Again, I wondered if He'd strike me dead with lightning for talking to Him that way—oh, how my views of Him have changed—but reasoned it would at least get the job done.

By the end of 36 hours, I was fine.

It wasn't the talking, it wasn't the sharing, it wasn't the praying, although I'm sure the atmosphere created by those things facilitated what happened. It was as simple as, at a

most random point of the weekend, the Lord showed me a single, simple thing that changed everything. It was as if He reached over and tapped me on the shoulder, pointed, and said, "Hey, Kim, look at that."

An interesting element of my dissatisfaction with myself as a wife and mom, I discovered, was linked to some issues I had with my dad and the way he parented me.

It took a while for those issues to surface—I think especially because he was really such a very good dad. I think *because* he was such a really good dad, and because I didn't want to complain about my really good dad, I pushed the issues I had with him away, back, down, out of my sight, and out of my mind where they were able to get a hearty fester going.

Through my season of depression, those issues began to rise to the surface, and I realized I was boiling with hurt, anger and bitterness. The way I'd chosen to handle my feelings was to vow and declare I'd do things differently when I became a parent, failing to realize that to make such an oath was to take matters into my own hands, rather than to go to my heavenly Father for comfort and healing and release—to make myself my own god, and to shackle myself to the fetid condition of my heart.

There at the conference, the Lord showed me plainly how corrosive my decisions had been. Then, in the very next moment, He delivered me from them.

How? In a flash, He showed me my dad's heart. He showed me how completely my dad loved me, and how he invested himself heart and soul in the betterment of my life. He showed me how every painful error my dad made was made while trying to benefit and improve my life—while trying to bless me.

He pointed me past my dad's actions to my dad's heart. In that moment, my heart broke for my dad, and I was set free—just as simple as that.

When the conference came to a close, I drew my dad aside to apologize for having held him in judgment and dishonor, and to thank him for being such an excellent dad.

I knew I was better, and I knew time would prove it.

From that simple weekend, one step at a time, I walked away from the blackness and into the light, and I've never gone back. A line or two from my journal reads, "Coming in for a landing—the high's wearing off. But I know God met me and worked a change in me. If I want to walk in that, I've just got to stay connected with Him. Jesus inside of me will surely change me—change how I think and how I behave. Thanks, Lord. I'm ready to get to know You better. You've promised to be my source—if I'll only let you. Lead me wherever you want—I'll walk with You. I'm going to grab onto Your hand and never let go." {eoa}

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